

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of July 22, 2014**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair John Quinn III, Selectmen Kevin T. Beal (absent), Brad Denny, Dennis Donahue (absent), Lynn Doney, Matthew Gadbois, Kenneth W. Goslant, K. David Maxwell, and James R. Wilson. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Laurie Baroffio (Finance Director), Ramon Hudson (Road Foreman), Patrick DeMasi (Utility Superintendent), Arlington Supplee (Chair, Board of Listers), Michele Braun (Zoning Administrator), Lawton Rutter (Chief, Northfield Ambulance Service), Stephen Fitzhugh (Utility Commissioner), Thomas Nesbitt (Phelps Engineering), John Kiernan (Phelps Engineering), Bob Duprey, Judy Hewitt, Crystal Carroll, Nanci Allard, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

Prior to the regular meeting, the Town Selectmen held an Informational Hearing beginning at 7:00 p.m. for the purpose of receiving written or oral views on the Warned Articles to be voted upon by Australian Ballot at the Special Town Meeting to be held on Tuesday, July 29, 2014. The Town of Northfield is seeking voter authorization for general obligation bonds in order to finance the replacement of water mains on Central Street, Washington Street, and King Street along with the replacement of storm drains on Central Street.

Thomas Nesbitt currently is employed by Phelps Engineering but he noted that he has been employed by other engineering firms since he began working with Northfield Village on upgrades to its water distribution system in 1990. The proposed work on Central Street and Washington Street is the culmination of plans developed in the early stages of this overall project, which for funding and other logistical reasons was broken into three (3) phases that subsequently were designated the "North Phase," the "West Phase," and the "South Phase." The South Phase was completed two (2) years ago as it was learned that the Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) planned to reconstruct the Vermont Route 12 and 12A roadways in 2013 and it was felt that it would be better to tear up a portion of those roads for the installation of new water mains before rather than after the new paving was completed. For financial and other reasons, the water mains on Central Street and Washington Street were not replaced at that time and this is the only part of the original overall project that has not been completed.

In addition, Phelps Engineering recommended the replacement of the water mains on King Street because their poor condition has resulted in very low water pressure on the street. This has made the fire hydrants in the area almost useless and created a real fire protection problem. Of the three (3) articles on the warning, Article 1 asks for authority to borrow \$1,250,000 to replace the water mains on Central Street and Washington Street. Article 2 requests the same authority in the amount of \$950,000 to replace the water mains on King Street. In addition, since the catch basins on Central Street are aged and in bad condition, Article 3 asks for the authority to borrow \$100,000 to replace the Central Street storm drains. The reasoning behind doing this stormwater work at the same time as the water main replacement is that as a stand-alone project, this would cost about \$150,000 but taking advantage of the other construction on the street would save about one-third of the projected expense.

John Kiernan, who also is employed by Phelps Engineering, then broke down the expenses for the first two articles and the impact on the average ratepayer. If Article 1 is successful, the average water customer should expect a \$2.40 increase in his/her monthly water bill. Should Article 2 pass, the average monthly increase would be \$1.90. Selectman Denny asked for confirmation that the stormwater work (Article 3) would be paid for by taxpayers rather than ratepayers. Mr. Kiernan confirmed that this was the case since this would be considered a highway rather than a utility expense. Chair Quinn asked what be the effect on the tax rate should Article 3 be approved. Finance Director Laurie Baroffio would recommend negotiating a ten (10) year bond with a \$12,000 payment the first year, which would result in a half-cent ($\frac{1}{2}\text{¢}$) increase on the tax rate. Chair Quinn then asked about the current condition of the Central Street storm drains. Mr. Kiernan stated that the drains are in very bad condition and so narrow that they cannot be properly cleaned. Mr. Nesbitt added that should the Town decide to put this off until later, there is a real possibility that either they could totally fail or the State might intervene and stipulate their replacement.

Mr. Nesbitt added that the Village Trustees did look into the possibility of disconnecting the catch basins from the sewer lines so that stormwater could be treated separately before being discharged into the Dog River. However, the initial estimates put the cost of this project at approximately \$750,000 so the Village Trustees decided to go forward with the less expensive alternative of replacing the current catch basins.

Selectman Gadbois asked if installing new water mains on King Street would allow for increased water flow to the nearby Bean Business Park and thus allow for potential development there. Mr. Nesbitt stated that it would be possible to create a new loop of water mains that would increase water flow to the area.

There being no other questions or comments, the Informational Hearing closed at 7:23 p.m. The regular meeting began immediately.

II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** Chair Quinn noted that “Brown Public Library (BPL) Roof Repairs” had been on the agenda for tonight but BPL Trustee John Stevens emailed yesterday stating that since he would be unable to attend this evening, that this discussion be postponed until the next regular meeting (08/12/14). Also, Selectman Denny will provide some information about National Night Out under “Public Participation.” Chair Quinn also took the opportunity to introduce Jeffrey Schulz, who began serving yesterday as Northfield’s new Town Manager. Chair Quinn added that Manager Schulz had been serving as the Town Administrator in Berlin, Vermont, for several years and he will bring a wealth of experience in economic development and other matters to Northfield.

IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED)**

a. **Brad Denny: National Night Out.** Mr. Denny reported that Police Chief James Dziobek and the Northfield Police Department (NPD) will be hosting National Night Out on the Common from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 5, 2014. This is an annual event dedicated to bring community members together in order to interact with their local law enforcement officers in order to promote crime prevention efforts. Free refreshments (hot dogs, ice cream, and soda) will be provided and a “Community Photo” will be taken at 7:00 p.m. In addition to police-community partnership theme, Mr. Denny felt that this was a good occasion to celebrate the merger of Northfield Town and Village into one community, an opportunity for residents to meet the new Town Manager, and to showcase the recent Common improvements. No rain date has been set so we are hoping for good weather.

b. **Bob Duprey: Concerns Regarding Riverbank Erosion along Water Street.** Mr. Duprey lives near the part of Water Street that was severely damaged by Tropical Storm Irene, resulting in the Town of Northfield agreeing to work with FEMA to purchase thirteen (13) storm-damaged structures that will be razed. He is concerned about a nearby home (formerly owned by Julia Felch) that will be torn down next month after hanging over the riverbank since the storm. Mr. Duprey is concerned about what will happen to the riverbank when the structure is removed. He would like to know what will be done to stabilize the riverbank. Manager Schulz did not know much about this matter beyond what he learned from a copy of the email that Zoning Administrator Michele Braun sent to Mr. Duprey that indicated that she has met with Patrick Ross of the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) on this matter. Mr. Ross confirmed that ANR “will allow the Town to stabilize and armor that bank” once the structures have been removed from that property, which should be done by the end of August. Manager Schulz would like to explore if there are grant monies available to cover this expense before resorting to local funding. Mr. Duprey is concerned that the riverbank work won’t be completed this year. Manager Schulz noted that Mr. Ross advises that the work should be completed before October 1, 2014. Mr. Duprey then asked about a storm-damaged house in the area that remains occupied. He had been under the assumption that all the structures in that area would be razed to allow for the construction of a community park. Chair Quinn stated that the FEMA buyout process for that house is ongoing and that someone is living there in the interim. Mr. Duprey asked when the Town will take possession of the 14 Western Avenue property that still has a trailer and other items still on it. Chair Quinn said that there is a ninety (90) day period after the foreclosure date before the Town can take possession; therefore, by the end of this August the Town will be able clear the property and prepare it for resale. Selectman Wilson asked if the Conservation Commission has been involved in this riverbank erosion issue. Chair Quinn is not sure but he will check on this.

V. **DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT**

a. **Road Foreman Ramon Hudson.** Mr. Hudson had provided a written report to the Board that detailed the activities of the Highway Department during the month of June 2014. Chair Quinn stated that since the Board already has seen this report, it probably would be more expedient for Mr. Hudson to discuss tonight the work planned for the next month or so (unless there are any questions about the written report). Mr. Hudson stated that the Highway Department has begun ditching roads in Northfield Falls this week, including Davis Avenue. When that is completed, the crew will begin ditching on Hallstrom Road, which should take some time. If any problem culverts are found along the way, they will be replaced. In addition, roadside mowing should continue for the next few weeks. Mr. Hudson also is working with Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi to repair an eroded riverbank near the Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF). ANR has been notified and Mr. Hudson will look for funding. Mr. Hudson added that he has discussed this and other matters with the new Town Manager. He will be going out to bid soon for sand/gravel and paving.

Selectman Gadbois asked if there was a problem with one of the covered bridges. Mr. Hudson confirmed that the first covered bridge on Cox Brook Road is in bad shape and will need to be closed for a day or two so that new bridge planks can be installed. Selectman Gadbois noted that the "Welcome to Northfield" sign in Northfield Falls needs to be mowed around. Mr. Hudson will see to it. It was suggested that a former adjoining property owner used to take care of this but he has moved on.

Chair Quinn asked if the new sidewalk plowing machine had arrived in town. Mr. Hudson said that it had. The new Western Star dump truck also will be here this week. Mr. Hudson had discovered some suspension problems but those are being addressed by the dealer. Chair Quinn asked about the length of the warranty for the vehicle. Mr. Hudson said that it was for seven (7) years. Selectman Goslant thanked Chair Quinn and Mr. Hudson for delivering the old dump truck to the buyer in Connecticut. This required a ten (10) hour trip and was done on their own (vacation) time.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **July 8, 2014 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 7-0-0.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #03-15.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #03-15 in the amount of \$387,847.50. Chair Quinn explained that the warrant is so high because it now includes utility payments, including power purchases. **Motion passed 7-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through July 6, 2014.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$73,609.93. **Motion passed 7-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Capital Expense Note (Sidewalk Plowing Machine).** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Wilson, to approve and sign the Capital Expense Note for the sidewalk plowing machine in the amount of \$44,775 at 1.24% interest; to approve and sign the Capital Expense Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the No-Arbitrage and Use of Proceeds Certificate. Chair Quinn noted that the amount was only slightly higher (\$775) than the Select Board had originally authorized. **Motion passed 7-0-0.**
- b. **Authorization to Sell Used 2003 Ambulance Unit to High Bidder.** The used Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) unit was advertised for sale by sealed bid with a submittal deadline of July 17, 2014. This unit had been put out to bid previously but the Select Board decided that the high bid received then (\$5608.88) did not reflect the true value of the vehicle so new bids were solicited. Two (2) bids were received this time with the high bid coming from Scott Lepeshko in the amount of \$7108.88. Mr. Lepeshko had been the previous high bidder. Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to authorize the sale of the used 2003 Ambulance unit to Scott Lepeshko for \$7108.88. Selectman Doney asked if there were any thoughts on how this money would be spent. He noted that it would take about \$2000 to repair the NAS rescue truck. Chair Quinn spoke to Ms. Baroffio about this last week (as Acting Town Manager) and the consensus was that approximately \$2000 would be used to fix the rescue unit and the remaining funds would be used to pay down the loan for the replacement unit. **Motion passed 7-0-0.**
- c. **2014 Grand List Errors & Omissions.** Board of Listers Chair Art Supplee explained that there are three (3) parcels being affected by this request to correct the 2014 Grand List. The first two involve the transfer of land between a mother and daughter so the value of one property is decreased by \$28,550 and the other increased by the same amount. The value of the third parcel is being reduced by \$1340 since a storage container had been removed from the site. The Listers had been informed of this removal before the Grand List was lodged but it had not been recorded properly. Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to correct the 2014 Grand List as requested by the Listers. **Motion passed 7-0-0.**
- d. **Joint Meeting of the Utility Commissions.** Chair Quinn noted that the initial meeting of the new Utility Commissions (Water & Wastewater and Electric) will be held in the Municipal Building on Thursday, July 24, 2014, at 6:00 p.m. This will be largely an organizational meeting with the election of chairs, the establishment of a regular meeting schedule, etc.

- e. **Special Town Meeting (Water & Stormwater Improvements Bond Vote).** As discussed earlier during the Information Hearing, this election by Australian Ballot will be held at the Northfield Middle/High School Lobby on Tuesday, July 29, 2014, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Early/Absentee Ballots for this election now are available from the Town Clerk's Office. You can either stop by the Municipal Building (51 South Main Street) to pick one up or call 1-802-485-5421 to have one mailed to you.
- f. **Economic Development Committee Meeting.** The committee's next meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 30, 2014, at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building.
- g. **Public Hearing (Proposed Town Plan Revisions).** The first of two public hearings regarding proposed revisions to the Northfield Town Plan will be held on Tuesday, August 12, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room located in the Brown Public Library (93 South Main Street). Copies of the revised Town Plan are available for review at the Brown Public Library and at the Town Clerk's Office (51 South Main Street). An electronic version also is available at the Northfield municipal website (www.northfield-vt.gov).
- h. **Status Reports: Various Projects**
 - 1. **Board Committee Assignments.** Although the Merger Transition Committee has not yet met to explore which committees can be combined, eliminated, etc., for the sake of expediency, Chair Quinn would like to keep the Economic Development Committee as is for the time being.

IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Possible Contamination of South Village Water Source.** Selectman Maxwell had heard that a business in the South Village area had leached some salt brine that was threatening to contaminate the local water source. Selectman Gadbois believes that the problem has been addressed.
- b. **Possible Expansion of Restricted Parking on Depot Square.** Selectman Goslant wanted to know if there still was a plan to expand the two (2) hour weekday parking restriction to include the parking spaces on the interior island. Selectman Maxwell stated that such a change would require approval of an ordinance, which would entail site visits, public hearings, etc. He would like Manager Schulz to look into this to determine the best course of action. Selectman Goslant also is concerned that the Town is encouraging people to park in the area behind the American Legion (Holland Park) even though the Town does not have a proper right-of-way other than the one-way entry next to the American Legion building. Chair Quinn stated that the Town is not trying to move the general public down there but rather encourage people who work on the Common or live in one of the Depot Square apartments to park back there so that patrons can park near the stores and restaurants.

X. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. **Former Acting Manager John Quinn.** Chair Quinn stated that he had some enjoyment from the three (3) weeks that he served as Acting Manager but he also is glad that this is not his permanent job. Selectman Goslant stated that he and the other Select Board members are very appreciative for Chair Quinn's service during this interim period.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED). There was none.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss a legal matter with Manager Schulz and Zoning Administrator Michele Braun present. **Motion passed 7-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:20 p.m.

Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 7-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 8:58 p.m. No action was taken.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Wilson, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to adjourn. **Motion passed 7-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the Select Board Meeting of August 12, 2014.